

Statement of Dr. Rehan Mullick
Before the Oversight and Investigation Subcommittee
of the Committee on International Relations
March 17, 2005

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and thank you members. I also would like to thank the committee for giving me the opportunity to be here today!

I received my PhD from Iowa State University in 1999. After completing my PhD I was working for a program affiliated with the University when in 2000 I was contacted by the UN and offered a position monitoring humanitarian conditions in Iraq and measuring the impact of the Oil for Food Program. I arrived in Iraq in September of 2000.

We have always known that Baghdad had repeatedly rejected the Security Council's offer to sell oil for the purchase humanitarian supplies. It was not until December 1996, when the effects on the population were devastating enough, threatening the regime itself, forcing them to sign a memorandum of understanding with the UN. Later on, however, they discovered that the program offers many opportunities for them to use it to their own advantage. We are aware of their ability to use oil for food contracts to exercise influence around the world, but not much has been said about the regime's ability to use Oil for Food supplies to attain a dreadful and complete leverage over their own population.

The Regime's influence around the world, through oil for food contracts, and its leverage over its own people, through socially engineered distribution of Oil for Food supplies, could not possibly have happened without the cooperation of certain elements within the bureaucratic hierarchies of the United Nations. Enough evidence has now accumulated, suggesting widespread corruption in the allocation of Oil for Food contracts. My report, two and a half years ago, pointed at massive discrepancies in the observation and distribution of these supplies inside Iraq.

According to the UN itself, the humanitarian tasks in Iraq revolved around the following activities:

- Tracking supplies received in Iraq, to establish quantities arrived, distributed and installed.
- Gauge the efficiency of procurement process, arrival, distribution and installation/utilization of these supplies.
- Assess the equitability of allocation and distribution of these, Oil-for-Food, supplies to the end-users.
- Ascertain the adequacy of supplies to meet the humanitarian needs.
- Observe the status of the humanitarian condition, and provide special reports that could facilitate the release of holds on urgently needed items.

Soon after I started my job, it became amply evident to me that there were gaping holes in UN's efforts to meet the above objectives. A robust, functional database on the use of the Oil for Food Program supplies, that one expects should have already been in place,

was just not there. The database that existed was muddled beyond repair. The survey instruments deployed for observations were at best amateurish. The statistics quoted in the UN reports were often extrapolated with impunity and were often scientifically misleading. Geographical disparity in the intensity of suffering among Iraqi population (a stark reality of the southern *Shia*-dominated *muhafazat* of Iraq) was neither researched nor ever mentioned in any of the UN reports. Similarly, it was clear that large quantities of Oil-for-Food supplies were simply not being distributed, and yet the observation activities were narrowly focused around the distribution lists provided by the Government of Iraq. This meant that a lot of items that were held back or redirected by the GOI were never observed. During my tenure in Iraq I reported all my findings and observations to my superiors culminating in a formal report I delivered to the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations in New York .

During the almost two years I was in Iraq I repeatedly made suggestions to strengthen the observation system and the data collection necessary to insure that the program was working as intended. Each suggestion resulted in my supervisors reducing my job responsibilities. This continued to occur until my only job was to run the slide projector at staff meetings.

I finally traveled to New York at my own expense because I was unable to get any UN officials in Iraq to pay attention to the problems that I repeatedly called to their attention.

I alerted the UN office in New York that:

The Iraqi regime was using the Oil-for-Food supplies to rebuild its tattered military, to accommodate its cohorts in the procurement process, to be preferential in the distribution of these supplies, and to stage-manage the humanitarian catastrophe in Iraq in making a case for the lifting of the sanctions.

The Iraqi regime had rendered the UN observation process meaningless, penetrated its information nerve centers by planting Saddam loyalists in the UN observation process. I also reported that the UN observation mechanism, failed to report the true humanitarian situation in Iraq, was uninterested in detecting the partiality of the distribution process, and was oblivious of stockpiling and redirection of these supplies for non-humanitarian purposes. As a result, the Iraqi military rebuilt its logistics by diverting thousands of trucks, pickups, 4X4s etc. that were delivered to Iraq under the Oil-for-Food Program. Similarly, it was common knowledge in Iraq that thousands of Toyota Camrys, and Avalons imported under the program were promptly gifted to the functionaries of the Iraqi Intelligence, and the Bath Party. Correspondingly, the Malaysian built Proton cars were offered freely to military officers at token prices. The UN was responsible to insure the proper distribution of these cars.

In summary, I reported that a significant percentage of the supplies were never distributed as the program intended (see Attachment); that many of the supplies such as trucks intended to distribute food were diverted to the Iraqi military; and that the program had been infiltrated by many Saddam loyalists. After I delivered my report in New York, I

expected that those senior management officials who had responsibility for the program would immediately contact me. In fact, I was not contacted by anyone. I heard nothing. Finally I was contacted and told that my contract was not being renewed, which in UN parlance meant I was being fired. I continued my efforts to notify other UN officials of my findings and toward this end sent my report to over a dozen UN officials. Like my initial efforts, this effort was met with absolute silence.

I have often wondered why the UN sought me out to do the job I went to Iraq to do, if they were not interested in having me actually do it. I have no satisfactory explanation.

It is sad that the UN administration in Iraq was allowing it to happen, but what is even more discouraging is the fact that when the issues were brought to light, the UN administration in New York not only systematically silenced my findings, but also, promptly allowed my contract to lapse, in effect firing me. In addition, as an American citizen of Pakistani origin I remain very disturbed that the UN's administration of the Oil for Food Program undermined the national interest of the United States.

Despite my very difficult years with the UN in Iraq, and equally disappointing experiences in New York, I have never given up on the ideals of the United Nations that epitomize global peace, equality and human dignity. Unfortunately, now I know from my own experience that persistent corruption in the UN will continue to undermine the attainment of these ideals, especially when the corruption is systematic and well orchestrated, like in the Oil for Food Program. Had UN chosen to listen to, and offer protection to those who blow the whistle on bureaucratic injustice and corruption, a program like Oil for Food would have worked more in the interest of the impoverished Iraqi people rather than their detractors.

I just hope that the deliberations of this committee, and the efforts of all others investigating the Oil for Food Program will generate enough synergy and influence, eventually forcing the United Nations to make its oversight procedures work!

59% ACCOUNT

Total Arrived Approx. 20 Billion Dollars

